

## Subpart B—Eligibility, Election and Duration of Benefits

### § 418.20 Eligibility requirements.

In order to be eligible to elect hospice care under Medicare, an individual must be—

- (a) Entitled to Part A of Medicare; and
- (b) Certified as being terminally ill in accordance with § 418.22.

### § 418.21 Duration of hospice care coverage—Election periods.

(a) Subject to the conditions set forth in this part, an individual may elect to receive hospice care during one or more of the following election periods:

- (1) An initial 90-day period;
  - (2) A subsequent 90-day period; or
  - (3) An unlimited number of subsequent 60-day periods.
- (b) The periods of care are available in the order listed and may be elected separately at different times.

[55 FR 50834, Dec. 11, 1990, as amended at 57 FR 36017, Aug. 12, 1992; 70 FR 70546, Nov. 22, 2005]

### § 418.22 Certification of terminal illness.

(a) *Timing of certification*—(1) *General rule.* The hospice must obtain written certification of terminal illness for each of the periods listed in § 418.21, even if a single election continues in effect for an unlimited number of periods, as provided in § 418.24(c).

(2) *Basic requirement.* Except as provided in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, the hospice must obtain the written certification before it submits a claim for payment.

(3) *Exceptions.* (i) If the hospice cannot obtain the written certification within 2 calendar days, after a period begins, it must obtain an oral certification within 2 calendar days and the written certification before it submits a claim for payment.

(ii) Certifications may be completed no more than 15 calendar days prior to the effective date of election.

(iii) Recertifications may be completed no more than 15 calendar days prior to the start of the subsequent benefit period.

(4) *Face-to-face encounter.* As of January 1, 2011, a hospice physician or hospice nurse practitioner must have a face-to-face encounter with each hospice patient whose total stay across all hospices is anticipated to reach the 3rd benefit period. The face-to-face encounter must occur prior to, but no more than 30 calendar days prior to, the 3rd benefit period recertification, and every benefit period recertification thereafter, to gather clinical findings to determine continued eligibility for hospice care.

(b) *Content of certification.* Certification will be based on the physician's or medical director's clinical judgment regarding the normal course of the individual's illness. The certification must conform to the following requirements:

(1) The certification must specify that the individual's prognosis is for a life expectancy of 6 months or less if the terminal illness runs its normal course.

(2) Clinical information and other documentation that support the medical prognosis must accompany the certification and must be filed in the medical record with the written certification as set forth in paragraph (d)(2) of this section. Initially, the clinical information may be provided verbally, and must be documented in the medical record and included as part of the hospice's eligibility assessment.

(3) The physician must include a brief narrative explanation of the clinical findings that supports a life expectancy of 6 months or less as part of the certification and recertification forms, or as an addendum to the certification and recertification forms.

(i) If the narrative is part of the certification or recertification form, then the narrative must be located immediately prior to the physician's signature.

(ii) If the narrative exists as an addendum to the certification or recertification form, in addition to the physician's signature on the certification or recertification form, the physician must also sign immediately following the narrative in the addendum.

(iii) The narrative shall include a statement directly above the physician signature attesting that by signing,

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the physician confirms that he/she composed the narrative based on his/her review of the patient's medical record or, if applicable, his/her examination of the patient.

(iv) The narrative must reflect the patient's individual clinical circumstances and cannot contain check boxes or standard language used for all patients.

(v) The narrative associated with the 3rd benefit period recertification and every subsequent recertification must include an explanation of why the clinical findings of the face-to-face encounter support a life expectancy of 6 months or less.

(4) The physician or nurse practitioner who performs the face-to-face encounter with the patient described in paragraph (a)(4) of this section must attest in writing that he or she had a face-to-face encounter with the patient, including the date of that visit. The attestation of the nurse practitioner or a non-certifying hospice physician shall state that the clinical findings of that visit were provided to the certifying physician for use in determining continued eligibility for hospice care.

(5) All certifications and recertifications must be signed and dated by the physician(s), and must include the benefit period dates to which the certification or recertification applies.

(c) *Sources of certification.* (1) For the initial 90-day period, the hospice must obtain written certification statements (and oral certification statements if required under paragraph (a)(3) of this section) from—

(i) The medical director of the hospice or the physician member of the hospice interdisciplinary group; and

(ii) The individual's attending physician, if the individual has an attending physician. The attending physician must meet the definition of physician specified in § 410.20 of this subchapter.

(2) For subsequent periods, the only requirement is certification by one of the physicians listed in paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section.

(d) *Maintenance of records.* Hospice staff must—

(1) Make an appropriate entry in the patient's medical record as soon as they receive an oral certification; and

(2) File written certifications in the medical record.

[55 FR 50834, Dec. 11, 1990, as amended at 57 FR 36017, Aug. 12, 1992; 70 FR 45144, Aug. 4, 2005; 70 FR 70547, Nov. 22, 2005; 74 FR 39413, Aug. 6, 2009; 75 FR 70463, Nov. 17, 2010; 76 FR 47331, Aug. 4, 2011]

### § 418.24 Election of hospice care.

(a) *Filing an election statement.* An individual who meets the eligibility requirement of § 418.20 may file an election statement with a particular hospice. If the individual is physically or mentally incapacitated, his or her representative (as defined in § 418.3) may file the election statement.

(b) *Content of election statement.* The election statement must include the following:

(1) Identification of the particular hospice that will provide care to the individual.

(2) The individual's or representative's acknowledgement that he or she has been given a full understanding of the palliative rather than curative nature of hospice care, as it relates to the individual's terminal illness.

(3) Acknowledgement that certain Medicare services, as set forth in paragraph (d) of this section, are waived by the election.

(4) The effective date of the election, which may be the first day of hospice care or a later date, but may be no earlier than the date of the election statement.

(5) The signature of the individual or representative.

(c) *Duration of election.* An election to receive hospice care will be considered to continue through the initial election period and through the subsequent election periods without a break in care as long as the individual—

(1) Remains in the care of a hospice;

(2) Does not revoke the election; and

(3) Is not discharged from the hospice under the provisions of § 418.26.

(d) *Waiver of other benefits.* For the duration of an election of hospice care, an individual waives all rights to Medicare payments for the following services:

(1) Hospice care provided by a hospice other than the hospice designated by the individual (unless provided under